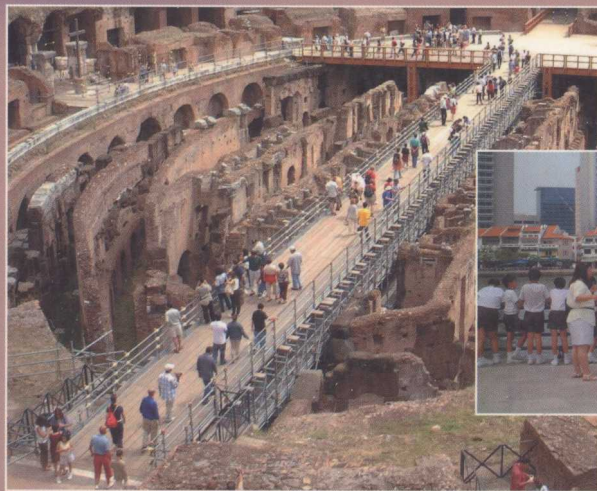


Aspects of Tourism

MANAGING EDUCATIONAL TOURISM



Brent W. Ritchie

ASPECTS OF TOURISM 10

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Managing Educational Tourism

Brent W. Ritchie
with Neil Carr and Chris Cooper

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Preface

A number of authors and commentators have noted the apparent interest amongst consumers for educational holidays. This interest has led to the provision of tourism products with some form of learning or education as an integral component. Examples include special interest holidays, including ecotourism and cultural heritage tourism, as well as specialist educational holiday providers and operators, such as Elderhostel, Odyssey Travel, Linblad Cruises and the Disney Orlando Institute. However, despite the apparent growth in these two areas of tourism, little research has been conducted on educational forms of tourism and the integration of learning experiences within tourism. Yet for some tourism niche markets, such as ecotourism, learning and education are identified as important aspects to the experience.

Similarly, a number of authors have noted the growth in provision of education, especially offshore or foreign educational experiences such as language schools, university and college tourism as well as school excursions and field trips. To date little has been written about their tourism impacts or issues surrounding the management of this tourism market segment. It is hoped that this book contributes in some small way to the study of both types of educational tourism and their sub-segments. It is hoped that by discussing and exploring educational tourism greater interest and understanding of this form of tourism will occur, perhaps stimulating more research in the field.

The book does not profess to cover the multitude of educational tourism types – as Smith and Jenner (1997a) note, broadly speaking all types of tourism can be viewed as educational. Instead the book highlights key market segments and sub-segments and explores key themes associated with the management of educational tourism, which may be explored in greater detail by other authors/researchers or in a second edition of this book! Authors made contributions in a variety of countries

and settings, yet the book highlights a range of similar themes and issues. Understanding educational tourists, the educational tourism industry and the impacts and issues of educational forms of tourism is critical if these forms of tourism is to be managed effectively and efficiently. The book aims to be accessible to not only academics and students but also the tourism and education industry. Therefore, the book consists of case studies and exhibits or displays to help highlight key issues and themes through the use of relevant and timely examples.

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Channel View for their assistance, hospitality and patience throughout this process. Finally, thanks to my family for their love and support, and to my partner Maria who has to put up with my constant ranting about tourism!

B. W. Ritchie
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Chapter 1

An Introduction to Educational Tourism

Introduction

The growth of both education and tourism as industries in recent decades has led to growing recognition of these industries from both an economic and social perspective. As Roppolo (1996: 191) notes, 'as countries become more interdependent, their success, growth and economic prosperity will largely depend on the ability of two industries – education and tourism – to create the avenues necessary to support international exchange and learning'. The changes in the tourism industry over the last two decades coupled with the changes in education have seen the convergence of these two industries with education facilitating mobility and learning becoming an important part of the tourist experience. Smith and Jenner note that educational tourism has generated little excitement to date from the tourist industry and this is reflected in the gathering of research and data. They note that 'very little research has been done because this segment is not seen as warranting it, yet because little research has been done, the industry is unaware of the true size of the segment' (Smith & Jenner, 1997a: 60). Roppolo (1996) agrees and notes that there are many areas yet to be examined empirically concerning the links between education and tourism.

This chapter begins by exploring relationships between education, tourism and educational tourism, first with a section to assist the reader in understanding tourism (definitions of tourism and the growth of this sector) and education (definitions of education and learning and the growth of education and lifelong learning). The chapter then discusses educational forms of tourism by providing a brief history and an outline of how educational tourism may be conceptualised or understood. The chapter argues that a systems and segmentation approach to understanding educational tourism is useful and concludes that, although

educational tourism is a broad and complicated field with limited past research, the importance of this area of tourism is likely to grow due to trends in both the tourism and education sectors.

Understanding Tourism

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries taking place in both developed and developing countries worldwide. The growth of tourism has been fuelled by the growth in leisure time combined with an increase in discretionary income and a desire to escape and engage in holidays both domestically and internationally. Definitions of tourism vary with respect to whether the definition is from a supply-side (industry) or demand-side (consumer) perspective. As Smith (1988: 181) has noted, 'there are many different legitimate definitions of tourism that serve many different, legitimate needs'. Moreover, many of the tourism definitions vary due to the organisation or individual trying to define tourism and to their motives. However, there are commonalities between many of the definitions.

Former tourism definitions stated that a minimum of a 24-hour stay was required to be considered a tourist. However, this has been modified to an overnight stay, which, according to Weaver and Oppermann (2000: 28), 'is a significant improvement over the former criterion of a 24-hour stay, which proved to be both arbitrary and extremely difficult to apply'. If a person's trip does not incorporate at least one overnight stay, then the term excursionist is applied (Weaver & Oppermann, 2000). This definition can be applied to both international and domestic travellers. For example, international stayovers (or tourists) are those that stay in a destination outside of their usual country of residence for at least one night, while international excursionists (or same-day visitors) stay in an international location without staying overnight. Furthermore, a domestic stayover (or tourist) is someone who stays overnight in a destination that is within their own country of residence but outside of their usual home environment (usually specified by a distance of some kind). Domestic excursionists (or same-day visitors) undertake a similar trip but do not stay overnight.

Smith (1988) believes that it is difficult to determine the precise magnitude of the tourism industry due to the absence of an accepted operational definition of tourism. Nevertheless, the tourism industry has been defined as an industry that 'encompasses all activities which supply, directly or indirectly, goods and services purchased by tourists' (Hollander, Threlfall & Tucker, 1982: 2). Hall (1995: 9) believes that the following three factors